

One Hundred Fifty Years  
of  
Methodism  
in  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan  
1833 — 1983

THE 150th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEES

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## PREFACE

Central United Methodist Church is celebrating 150 years of Methodism in Sault Ste. Marie at a time when other Methodist churches are preparing for the Bicentennial of Methodism in America in 1894.

Publishing a history is always a fitting and proper item for an anniversary, for time and time again, we have learned that a knowledge of our past helps us to chart a course for the future. To know where we are going, it helps to know where we have been.

Throughout this history the reader will find that the thread which has bound, and still binds the church together, is people - people within and without the church, who have planned, sacrificed and worked together - sharing in the joys and sorrows, the anxieties, the good times and the bad. They are people who believed in God, and who cared enough to give of their time, their talents, their prayers and their service to keep His church alive and growing. They realized that all they had came from God, and in return they gave to Him.

So many people have contributed to the growth of Central United Methodist Church as it is now, that it is impossible to mention all names. For all omissions, errors, and mistaken inferences, we offer apologies, along with sincere appreciation to all the faithful members, and non-members, who have helped to build and carry on the spirit of Methodism in Sault Ste. Marie. The future holds even greater possibilities for growth.

The 150th Anniversary Committee

## INTRODUCTION

Methodism has always been "faith in action." From the early years of John Wesley's ministry in England, beginning at Epworth in 1738, Methodism has been characterized by its mission, commitment, compassion, and social concerns. Methodists preached and practiced the equality of all mankind as part of their social gospel. This belief in spiritual and social equality made Methodism a pillar of democracy and an enemy of all forms of slavery and other social, economic, and political abuses of humankind.

Methodism has grown as a force for change as a result of its broad appeal to all classes of society. Thus rich and poor, white collar and blue collar, city dweller and farmer have all been welcome participants as equals in a community of believers. Further, Methodists have never claimed exclusive possession of the "Truth," but have generally maintained an openness to fellow Christians of other denominations. Another element in the Methodist tradition of mission and change has been the strongly held ideal of the perfectibility of the individual believer and the improvement and perfectibility of society. These are key ideas in understanding the impact of Methodism in bringing about change in individual lives, in social customs and behaviors, and in the practices and goals of education, the law, and political institutions.

The Christian responsibility of being "Your Brother's Keeper" and "Your Brother's Brother" has been the solid ground of the Methodist mission to reform jails, asylums, poorhouses, and child labor laws, and has led to the establishment of charitable institutions, schools, universities, hospitals, and missions worldwide.

Methodism was established in British North America by a group of immigrant Methodists forming a society in New York City in 1766. The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States was formally organized in 1784. Methodism spread throughout the thirteen states and western frontier territories. Bishop Thomas Coke and Bishop Francis Asbury guided the growth of Methodism during this early period.

By the autumn of 1831 the membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church was over 500,000. Itinerant ministers numbered 1,876 and licensed local preachers 12,223. The Methodist work in the Michigan Territory at this time consisted of seven circuits and missions, fourteen traveling preachers and a membership of 963, all in the Detroit area and under the authority of the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the midst of a growing nation and expanding congregations American Methodism extended its areas of concern by forming the Tract Society in 1817, The Missionary Society in 1819, and the Sunday School Society in 1827. The first foreign mission was established in Liberia in 1833.

For many years Sault Ste. Marie was known as Bowating, or to the Indians, a place of excellent fishing. Records show that in 1641 Fathers Isaac Jogues and Charles Raymbault made a visit to the village at the rapids and established a small temporary mission. It is from this date that organized religion in Sault Ste. Marie traces its beginnings. In 1696 the Marquette Mission was abandoned and for well over a century no religious contacts were made. With the coming of Fort Brady in 1822 the Baptists sent Rev. Abel Bingham and the Presbyterians sent Rev. Jeremiah Porter in 1831.

When the New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in Poughkeepsie on May 8, 1833, much concern was expressed over the fact that there were such vast geographical areas of North America which were not being served by the Methodists. This prompted them to appoint Rev. John Clarke to Green Bay and Sault Ste. Marie. The work in the Sault had been started in 1831 by Rev. John Sunday, an Indian preacher from Canada.

Rev. Clarke found himself in a small community of Americans, Frenchmen, Indians and half breeds. Community life was centered around the United States Indian Agency, established in 1822 by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft; Fort Brady, under the command of Col. Hugh Brady; and Water Street immediately west of the fort with its mixture of fur trading warehouses, saloons, hotels, and small private residences. With the arrival of Rev. Clarke the Methodists joined the Roman Catholics, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians laboring in the Sault.

The Indian Agency was located in an elegant Federal Style mansion of fifteen rooms which had been constructed by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft in 1828 near the present site of the offices of the Edison Sault Electric Company on Portage Avenue.

Fort Brady was located in the rectangle presently bounded by Bingham Avenue, Portage Avenue, Brady Street and the St. Mary's River. The small

business and residential area was located west of the fort along the water front where the present Corps of Engineers park, fountain, and workshop building are located.

In 1834 Rev. Clarke backed by the New York Board of Missions, built 13 log huts, a log school, a house, and a missionary home at the Little Rapids, two miles east of the fort on the present site of the City Golf Course. Elm trees planted while the Methodist Mission was in operation marked the spot of the original buildings until 1971 when it became necessary to remove them as victims of Dutch elm disease. An upright marker, purchased with Memorial Funds of the Central United Methodist Church, now designates the site of the original Mission Reserve. It is located on the left side of Riverside Drive on the curve by the Golf Club, near the point where boats are loaded on the lagoon, between the mainland and Rotary Park.

Following the death of his daughter, Helen Amelia, in 1834 Rev. Clarke, known as a builder of missions, was sent West to the Keweenaw country to build other missions. Sault Ste. Marie and Keweenaw Missions were transferred to the Michigan Conference in 1837 and listed in the conference Minutes of 1837 as one charge. In the Fall of 1837 the Michigan Conference appointed D.M. Chandler to "Sault Ste. Marie and Keweenaw."

In 1839 a Mission district which included Sault Ste. Marie and the south shore of Lake Superior was created. Rev. W.H. Brockway was made Superintendent and also preacher in charge of Sault Ste. Marie. Rev. George King was his assistant. In the Conference Minutes of 1840, there were four districts and a Mission District in the Lake Superior country containing three charges -- Sault Ste. Marie, Keweenaw, and Mackinac. These were supplied by six ministers. Rev. W.H. Brockway was Superintendent and among his six preachers were two Indians -- Peter Marksman and John Kah-beege. Rev. Brockway was Superintendent of the Indian Missionary District until 1848, and served as chaplain at Fort Brady most of this time.

At Ann Arbor on August 16, 1843 Rev. W.H. Brockway asked for Rev. John H. Pitizel's appointment to the mission district. Bishop Soule arranged to have him take charge of the Mission at Sault Ste. Marie. This additional manpower was needed as a result of expanding missions work done by Rev. Brockway and his preachers.

On August 29, 1843, Rev. Pitizel and his wife, their three year old daughter, and Mrs. Pitizel's twelve year old sister, left Detroit on the steamer, Constitution, for Mackinaw. On the same boat were Rev. George W. Brown and his wife who were bound for Keweenaw on Lake Superior, having been assigned as missionaries there. On August 31, a little before noon, they sighted Mackinac Island. Four days later they left the Island for DeTour and then Sault Ste. Marie. As they came up the river they sighted the Methodist Mission, where the country club now stands, and then Fort Brady. At the foot of Bingham Avenue was the baptist mission under the care of Rev. Abel Bingham. At 7:00 that evening they landed at Fort Brady and stayed that night in the quarters of the Rev. W.H. Brockway, who was also Chaplain of the Fort. The Fort property extended from Portage Avenue to the river. The next day, with the native preacher, Kah-beege, as interpreter, they went to the Mission which was to be their home.

Even though the distance between the Fort and the Mission was less than two miles, it was necessary to make the trip by boat. Dense woods separated the two. On Sunday, Sept. 10, Rev. Pitizel preached to a congregation of approximately 55 Indians through use of an interpreter.

The following is taken from "Lights and Shades of Missionary Life" by Rev. J.H. Pitizel, page 38: "When in their meetings, even a stranger to their language could readily perceive that religion is the same among the untutored Indians as among the whites. Their fervent prayers, their devout hymns of praise, their subdued and often tearful attention to the preached word, their consistent religious experience - as they relate in the class or love feast - and the correctness of their general deport-



ment may be favorably compared with that of more knowing white brothers."

Rev. Pitizel continued to serve the Sault area until 1860. Like Rev. Clarke before him the family suffered the loss of his one year old son, Henry Eugene, in 1854.

During the 1840's the Sault area went into a decline. This was the result of the declining fur trade and the absence of other commercial enterprises. Although there was some transshipment of copper via the portage railroad around the rapids, copper mining had not as yet become a major industry further West in the Keweenaw region. By 1840 the first Fort Brady was almost totally abandoned and allowed to decay and fall into ruinous condition. Also with the closing of the United States Indian Agency, which had been constructed by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft in 1828, Indian affairs were transferred to the Mackinac Island Indian Agency. All these events reduced the total population of military, civilian, and Indians of the Sault area to less than 1000.

From 1853 to 1855 the construction of the State Canal and Locks through the St. Mary's Rapids brought renewed growth to the area. The Methodist Mission, however, had reached the end of its usefulness and the 640 acres of the Methodist Mission Reserve, or "Mission Farm" as it was known, was leased or rented for farming purposes until July 21, 1887 when it was sold to Samuel Cargill of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, for \$60,000.

## THE MIDDLE YEARS 1873 to 1940

The Methodist presence in the Sault all but disappeared until 1873 when Rev. Isaac Johnston was appointed minister to the Sault by the Detroit Conference. Rev. Johnston was a dynamic man of action and soon had a group of Methodists spearheading the construction of a church. The group responsible for re-establishing Methodism in the Sault included Dr. Alexander P. Heighold, Ezra Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Stonehouse, and Mrs. James Graham.

The renewed Methodist work found temporary quarters in the Temperance Hall on Portage Avenue. With the rapid growth of the congregation, a larger building was needed. The Ladies' Aid Society took the leadership in raising funds to build a 20 foot by 40 foot building.

In order to understand the proposed location of the new church, the reader must understand that at that time Ashmun Street extended only as far north as Portage Avenue. Thus the new church was built on the north side of Portage Avenue, facing south, in a place which later became Ashmun Street, when it was extended to Water Street. Mrs. George Kemp was the organist for the new church.

For several years this church proved adequate. Then Henry L. Newton, in the name of the church, purchased a lot on the northwest corner of Spruce and Court streets. This corner lot was purchased from Thomas and Ann Ryan for \$600. The location of this purchase was severely criticised because it was well out in the woods. Later it became the heart of the business district. The deed was signed on February 16, 1893 by James Graham, Thomas B. Stonehouse, Henry L. Newton, George Kemp, Robert Adams, Simeon Dumond, and John Ferris.

The church building was moved from Portage Avenue to the new location. Soon the congregation outgrew the seating capacity of the little building. The first improvement was raising the elevation of

the ceiling by four feet and then adding a substantial addition to the rear of the structure. The lot upon which the church stood extended westward to Ashmun Street and provided adequate room for extending the church parsonage along the west side of the church.

Sault Ste. Marie experienced dramatic growth and change from the 1880s through 1910. A new and much enlarged Federal lock was constructed. Several public utilities were constructed including a hydroelectric plant and electrical distribution system, a gas generation plant and distribution mains, and an extensive streetcar system. Railroads also connected the Sault with lower Michigan and states and communities to the West.

There was anticipation of growth as the LaCrosse Syndicate began construction of a large water power canal bringing water from Ashmun Bay down the entire south side of the city. The plans would have converted the old Methodist Mission property into a series of large grain mills powered by waterwheels. The present Edison Sault Power Canal occupies about one half the length of the original canal site. The lumbering industry to the west of Sault Ste. Marie also contributed to the economic growth of the city.

During the period from 1873 to 1890 seven ministers called Central Methodist their home. Rev. C.L. Church came in 1876 succeeding Rev. Johnston. Rev. S.J. Brown came in 1877 and he was followed by Rev. D.B. Millar in 1879. In 1882 Rev. W.E. Bigelow was appointed minister and in 1885 Rev. G.H. Whiting replaced him. In 1887 Rev. David Casler, a man responsible for establishing many churches throughout the Upper Peninsula, came to the Sault.

From 1883 to 1885 Rev. Casler had served as Presiding Elder (now known as District Superintendent) of the Lake Superior District which was the western portion of the Upper Peninsula. When in 1885 the entire peninsula was united into one district, known as the Marquette District, Rev. Casler assumed the additional duties of a larger

territory from 1885 till 1887.

The Sault Ste. Marie church grew dramatically under the ministry of Rev. Casler and another addition was added to the west side of the church.

By 1890 it became apparent that the church structure was too small for the growing congregation and its community outreach. During most services adults sat on chairs in the aisles and children sat on the pulpit platform. In September of 1890 the condition of the local church, along with a new building proposal, was presented to the Bishop of the Detroit Conference. The Conference accepted the plans for a new church. Many felt that the church at Owosso, Michigan, was the best new church in the state. The design of the interior was generally called "The Akron Plan" and the exterior architectural features were typical of the so-called "Richardsonian Romanesque" style popular prior to 1920. The Official Board agreed with Rev. Whalen and hired Mr. D.P. Clark, the architect of the Owosso Church. The only significant change in the design was a different style of steeple.

The local building committee of 1892 included R.M. Adams, J.N. Adams, George Blank, David Brown, C.S. Bush, Henry L. Newton, George Kemp, and G.S. Wheatley.

It was decided that the exterior walls of the new church should be red sandstone that had been blasted from the bed of the new power canal being constructed by Michigan Lake Superior Power Company. S.F. Howie was the general contractor for the construction of the church and Samuel Walker was the supervisor over all masonry work. Mr. Henry Letcher presented the large bell which still calls the congregation to Sunday morning services.

Due to the growth of the congregation and the pressures of supervising and financing the new church, Rev. Whalen and his board requested the services of Rev. W.C. Hicks as assistant minister. The building of the new church was begun in 1892. The existing church building had been moved across

the street and about half a block to the east on Spruce Street. The front of the church was placed to face south while the back of the church faced Spruce Street. It became an apartment and commercial building which still stands at 204-206 East Spruce Street.

The parsonage was moved south on the west side of Court Street, near Dawson. It continued to serve as a parsonage until the pastorate of Rev. Stoakes, when it was sold and used as a residence until the present Woolworth store was built in 1965. It was then torn down in order to make room for progress.

The cornerstone of the new church was laid in 1893 and on July 1, 1894 the church was dedicated by Bishop Charles H. Fowler. Even before the interior work of the auditorium was completed church services were held in the lower floor. Rev. Calvin Thompson, appointed in September of 1893, also held revival services in this temporary accommodation. Interestingly at the time of dedication a debt of only \$11,000 remained as \$20,000 had already been raised and paid by the congregation.

The new building was 75 feet by 108 feet with a large auditorium and two adjoining rooms separated from the auditorium by rolling doors. In addition there were three large balconies. The seating capacity was 1200. In September of 1894 Rev. C.M. Thompson served as host pastor for Bishop J.M. Walden and the Detroit Annual Conference. This was the first time that the Conference had ever convened north of the Straits of Mackinac.

Because its sanctuary provided the largest auditorium in the city, the Central Methodist Church became the center for High School graduations, concerts and any programs which required a large seating capacity. It was the site of the McComb and Chase revival meetings of the 1920s.

In Sault Ste. Marie, as in American society at large, the twin focal points for family life were the home and church. Women were more or less restricted to domestic activities, except for their involvement in church, social and charitable

organizations. The Central Methodist Church developed a program to reach all the different age groups of men and women.

One of the first of these was the Ladies' Aid whose members provided many types of services for the church. They were looked upon as the "Money Raisers" because whenever a financial need arose the women met it, usually by serving a public dinner. The ladies of Central Methodist had a reputation for serving good food, and, as a result, such dinners were well attended. In fact, church dinners in those days were almost social affairs.

Beside raising money, members of the Ladies' Aid were much concerned about the welfare of the church families. If there was illness or death someone was at the home immediately, offering food, service, child care, or whatever was needed. When a new pastor was appointed the women cleaned the parsonage thoroughly before his arrival. They gave freely of their time and energy in all areas of the church.

In addition to the Ladies' Aid there was a Womans' Home Missionary Society and two groups of the Womans' Foreign Missionary Society, one meeting in the afternoon and another in the evening. Later the Fireside Club was organized to provide for those who could not attend Ladies' Aid meetings in the afternoon.

The Epworth League, forerunner of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, was organized in Cleveland, Ohio, on May 15, 1889. It was designed to provide opportunities for religious and social activities that were both uplifting and enjoyable to youth of High School age. Throughout the years this was a very active group in Central Methodist Church. They saw themselves as a group which should stress the religious angle as well as the social one. Their Sunday night services usually found 25 or more youth in attendance at a well-planned program of study which was followed by recreation. They were involved in community services, such as providing a program of music plus an uplifting message, monthly

at the "County Poor Farm" which was the title given to the county home for the aged. Periodically they provided a similar program at the Bay Mills Indian Community. Occasionally they staged a play. One of these is recalled as "My Awful Dad." Such activities were shared with the Baptist and Presbyterian youth groups and also the Rudyard and Pickford groups. Frequently such exchanges extended to the Canadian youth groups. To finance their projects public pancake suppers were prepared and served by the members. These were all well attended.

The Easter Sunrise Service which had been started in 1902, followed by a breakfast, was the responsibility of the Epworth Leaguers at that time, just as it is now for the Youth Fellowship. Well planned parties were held regularly.

The Sunday School program was large and provided for all ages. The average attendance was over 250. All classes were divided into boys' and mens', or girls' and womens'. There were no mixed classes. A young man's class and a young woman's class, with about 20 in each group, met each week. The primary department, grades 1 through 3 had more than 50 in attendance each Sunday. The same was true for every class. The Sunday School was a very meaningful part of the church program at that time, not only for children, but for adults and young people. The church was the center of their lives and nothing but illness, interfered with attendance.

The Cradle Roll was a vital part of the program. For many years Miss Mary Casler headed this department. Names of babies born to Methodist families were recorded and constant contact was made on special occasions such as birthdays. When the child was old enough to begin Sunday School, contact was made with the family and they were urged to start the child in the Cradle Roll Department.

Through the years following the completion of the Central Methodist Church many ministers served it. Due to the policy of the Detroit Conference of

changing ministers every two or three years the list is extensive. Rev. C.M. Thompson followed Rev. Whalen in 1893. Rev. Whalen went on to serve as Presiding Elder of the Lake Superior District. In 1898 Rev. Arthur W. Stalker was appointed and he was followed by Rev. C.B. Steele, appointed September 12, 1900. He arrived in the Sault in October during a serious typhoid epidemic

Rev. Steele was a renowned public speaker and on Sunday, September 15, 1901, he preached a memorial sermon "The Ethical Foundations of Patriotism" after the assassination of President William McKinley.

On January 28, 1904, a fire destroyed the interior of the church leaving the exterior stone walls intact. Only the year before the whole interior had been extensively refurbished with a total cost of improvements of \$36,000. There was also \$6,000 of the original indebtedness owed. The insurance amounted to only \$13,000, and only \$1,000 of that was on interior fixtures.

Immediately a committee was appointed to arrange for rebuilding. This committee included Marshall E. Hunt, Robert G. Ferguson, James T. Moore, James L. Lipsett, James E. Walen, and George Blank. By 1905 the building was completed and the church reopened for services. During the reconstruction the congregation had been given the use of the First Baptist Church which was located at 519 Court Street about where the Madigan Insurance Agency is presently located.

Rev. M.C. Hawks was appointed to the Sault in 1903 and served during the rebuilding of the church building. Rev. S.W. Horner came in 1908 and he was followed in 1912 by Rev. D. Stanley Shaw.

During Rev. Shaw's ministry Central Methodist Church added over 200 new members. On May 17th, 1914 a special "Jubilee Sunday" was organized to celebrate the church being free of all debt. Former pastor Arthur Stalker was the speaker and Rev. J.E. Whalen, also a former pastor, was in charge of the



mortgage burning in the evening service.

On September 16, 1915 Rev. D. Stanley Shaw was appointed pastor of the Port Huron church and Rev. S. Arthur Cook, a pastor in the Minnesota Conference for 20 years, was appointed to the Sault. Rev. Cook was the author of a graded Sunday School Lesson Series used widely in Methodist churches. In October Rev. Cook was elected Chairman of the Sault Ministerial Association. Central Methodist recorded impressive growth under Rev. Cook with addition of 390 members. In September of 1918 the annual conference moved Rev. Cook to Saginaw and moved Dr. Eli Phillips Bennett from Pontiac to the Sault.

Dr. Bennett had received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and was the author of several books. In 1924, during Dr. Bennett's pastorate, Chase S. Osborn, Governor of Michigan from 1910 to 1912, presented Central Methodist church with the lighted rotating cross that now tops its steeple. It was given in memory of his mother, Mrs. Margaret Anna Osborn, M.D. The 15 foot cross lighted by 32 bulbs can be seen for many miles. For years sailors on the ships on the St. Mary's River have commented upon it and its message. At one time the church stationery carried the phrase "The Church With The Gleaming Cross." Because of the sway of the cross in the wind it has been difficult to keep the cross lighted. In 1979 it was repaired, rewired, repainted and given a new motor. The George Kemp family paid the maintenance costs of the cross for many years.

Boy Scout Troop #103 was organized in 1920 with Russell Stonehouse as the first Scoutmaster. Sixteen boys were enrolled. Central Methodist Episcopal Church was named as being responsible for this troop. In 1921 Frederick Baldwin was appointed Scoutmaster and eighteen boys were enrolled. By 1955 the registration had reached 55, and that year 7 Scouts, with a leader attended the National Jamboree. Although representation at this Jamboree had been a custom for many years, this was the largest group ever sent. This troop remained an outstanding troop in the area and many of the boys

became Eagle Scouts, among them Dr. Donald D. Finlayson. The troop continued until 1975 when it was disbanded, due to lack of adult leadership.

During the Spring of 1922 Dr. George W. Olmstead, Superintendent of the Marquette District from 1921 to 1927, began negotiating for 91 acres on Lake Michigamme as a site for the Michigamme Methodist Institute. The Epworth Leaguers in the Sault, and elsewhere in the district, gathered pledges of more than \$9,000 to purchase this property. In August the first District Epworth League Institute was held on the grounds with Bishop Luther B. Wilson of New York as the keynote speaker. Members of the Epworth League from Central church attended that first institute.

Camp Michigamme is a beautiful site near the lake of the same name. When the camp first opened both campers and counselors slept in tents. There was a small house in which the pastors slept. The Tabernacle was a large wooden structure used as dining room and kitchen, auditorium, classroom, etc. Singing around the tables, around the evening camp fires and many other places, showed that everyone was having a good time, but when the time came for breaking camp, the farewells to new-found friends were usually not so joyful.

In the years that have followed many changes have taken place. Old buildings have been replaced, campers no longer sleep in tents, and many new facilities have been added. The program has also changed. In the beginning the camp was available to youth only and that for only a period of 10 days. Now there are camps most all summer, ranging in age from children of 3rd grade through adults and families.

At present (1938) each camper is eligible for a small campship. Funds for this purpose come from the Tempi Dubow Fund which was established in memory of the daughter of Grace and Sam Dubow.

Rev. Joseph Dutton became pastor of the Sault church in October of 1922. He served the Sault

congregation until September of 1926. From 1929 to 1935 he was Superintendent of the Marquette District.

At the annual conference in 1926 Rev. Dutton was moved to the Detroit Campbell Avenue Church and Rev. George B. Marsh was appointed to Central Methodist in the Sault. While pastor at the Sault Rev. Marsh served two years as dean of the Michigamme Methodist Institute. Rev. Marsh was particularly interested in the Epworth League and all the young people of the church.

About 1925 the public schools and the churches arranged a program of Released Time by which children in the 3rd through 6th grades were released from school at 2:15 on Wednesday afternoons to attend religious training classes at the churches of their choice. The program was so successful that it continued till about 1970.

On September 11, 1928 the Detroit Annual Conference convened at Central Methodist Church in Sault Ste. Marie. This was 34 years after it had met in the Sault in 1894. More than 600 delegates and officials attended the conference. For the homecoming celebration. Attending this conference were several former pastors including Rev. David Casler, 89 years old, Rev. J.E. Whalen, 84 years old, Rev. Calvin M. Thompson, Rev. David B. Millar, Rev. Arthur W. Stalker, and Rev. Joseph Dutton. Dr. Eli Phillips Bennett had died in August of 1928. Rev. David Casler was given "the Conference Cane" as the oldest minister present. The delegates were fed by the Presbyterian Ladies at the Presbyterian Church. The Evening News devoted the entire front page to coverage of this Conference.

The delegates were welcomed to the Sault by former governor Chase S. Osborn. His speech was a rousing attack on "Rum and Romanism" a direct attack on the National Democratic candidate for President, Governor Alfred Smith of New York.

In February of 1929 Rev. Marsh accepted an

assignment to a pastorate in Detroit. Easter Sunday, March 31st, was his last Sunday as pastor of Central church. In the morning service the church choir sang the Easter cantata, "The Crucifixion," and in the evening a "Farewell Service" honored Rev. and Mrs. Marsh.

In April of 1929 Rev. Marshall W. Hoyt was appointed to replace Rev. Marsh. He came to the Sault from Bad Axe, Michigan.

Central Methodist Church was again damaged by fire in March of 1934 when Paul Rader and his singer were conducting a week of revival services at the church. The following is recorded by Mary Casler, daughter of Rev. David Casler, former pastor of the church. She was in the congregation at the time of the fire.

"One evening, while Mr. Radar was preaching, flames and smoke were seen around the radiator in the northwest corner of the sanctuary. An usher telephoned the fire department. Mr. Radar asked the singer to lead the congregation in singing. There was no commotion from the large audience. A few went out but the others sang as the fire was being extinguished. It was caused by sparks from the chimney igniting refuse in the other flue which had not been used for years, except by an annual visit of the chimney swifts which made their home in it every summer."

Each year these birds returned in hundreds and circled in a cloud around the Methodist chimneys before diving into them. There was little damage to the church, the chimneys were cleaned, and screens were installed to prevent the birds from nesting there.

After Rev. Clyde Gearhart became pastor in 1934, a fund was started to have the organ rebuilt. There had always been a special emphasis on good music at Central church. The local newspapers, for more than 40 years, reported the Christmas and Easter programs that offered "Elijah," "The Messiah," "The Crucifixion" and many other special

musical events. The Sunday services were well known for the quality of the choir and organ music.

Prior to World War II Central church had a number of distinguished organists including Mrs. S.W. Horner, Mrs. Elmer Hunt, and Mr. Allen Babcock. The choir directors included Mr. and Mrs. Muehling, Miss Gladys Hunt, and perhaps most notable of all - Prof. Gordon from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

In the autumn of 1937 Rev. Ross Stoakes was appointed pastor of Central church. He actively encouraged the organ repair fund. During 1940 the organ was completely rebuilt and on December 22, 1940, it was dedicated in a special Christmas service. Mr. Allen Babcock was the organist. Mr. Earl P. Thomas conducted the choir.

During the pastorate of Rev. Ross Stoakes the old parsonage at 522 Court Street was sold and a smaller, more modern home was purchased at 508 St. James Place. This home proved to be too small and during the pastorate of Rev. James R. Balfour it was sold and the present parsonage at 1004 Parnell was purchased.

#### 1940 to The Present

During the period from 1900 through 1955 Sault Ste. Marie became an industrialized community of 20,000. Union Carbide Corporation, the Northwest Leather Corporation, Cadillac-Sault Lumber Company, the Sault Woolen Mill, and a host of smaller enterprises provided several thousand jobs. The Corps of Engineers expanded operations to handle four locks. This required several hundred employees.

Previous to 1940 women of Central Methodist Church had a choice of several organizations to which they might belong: The Womans' Home Missionary Society: two groups of the Womans' Foreign Missionary Society: the Ladies' Aid and the Fireside Club. In 1940 all these organizations united under the name of Womans' Society of Christian Service (WSCS). This reorganization came as the result of reorganization at the general

church level. Although there were many dissatisfied with the change, the transition at Central was made without noticeable difficulties. This smooth transition resulted from the hard work and careful planning of the first president of the Womans' Society of Christian Service, Mrs. Clyde Hunsberger, and the pastor, Rev. Ross Stoakes. Both took a positive attitude toward the new organization and felt that it would work. Leaders of Central were later called upon to explain to other churches in the Marquette District how the Central unit was functioning.

One tradition that disappeared with the new organization was the Martha Washington dinner which, for many years, had been served around the time of Washington's Birthday. This annual event was one which was anticipated by the community. The women who served the dinner of ham, scalloped potatoes and cherry pie, wore costumes appropriate to the occasion and decorations were in keeping with the theme also. Large crowds of people attended these dinners and when they were discontinued, about 1940, the community expressed disappointment.

December 21, 1941. Another fire! This one occurred at 6 o'clock in the evening. It was Sunday and the annual concert of the Methodist choir was to have been given at 8 o'clock. The entire area around the altar had been decorated with cotton batting, a sparkling compound and candles in glass candelabra. The choir member responsible for the decorations went to the church early to light the candles to be sure that the effect was that which was desired. A lighted candle toppled over and fire started immediately. The Evening News the following day carried this story: "Heat of the fire at the altar was so intense that the great chandelier, high above it, was smashed, and as the water from the fire hose was played upon the blaze, the pipes of the new \$10,000 organ melted and fell. Seats almost at the rear of the large auditorium were blistered and the rear walls were hot. The pulpit Bible and altar rail were destroyed and considerable damage to the ceilings of the basement auditorium and Sunday School rooms. The building was empty except for a

few persons who were completing the decorations preparatory to the annual Christmas concert of the Methodist choir which was to have been held at 8 o'clock that evening. Damage is estimated at \$10,000 which is covered by insurance."

For several months it was necessary to hold church services in the Fellowship Hall on the ground floor. When the repairs were completed the organ console had been moved from the choir loft to the main floor in a position where the piano usually sits. The area previously covered by the organ pipes had been covered by a cloth grill.

In 1942 Sault Ste. Marie was invaded by over 10,000 military personnel, sent to protect the locks from enemy attack. With 55 barrage balloons and anti-aircraft gun sites and military installations of all kinds in and about the city, Central Methodist Church became involved in serving the military through many programs. Helping the dependents of military personnel was a special role for pastor and congregation. The church was often filled for special services and had standing room only with soldiers lining the back and side walls. For several years the 1,200 seating capacity was hardly adequate. Rev. Walter Ratcliffe, pastor from 1943 to 1950, found himself involved with an expanded congregation of both blacks and whites, military and civilian, and the increased pastoral demands of dealing with family and loved ones as the war took its toll of the young men from the Sault. All of the church groups rallied to aid the U.S.O. programs and other efforts of the church to cope with the community and military. Pastor Ratcliffe often filled the role of chaplain for the Coast Guard base and at chapels on the Camp Lucas-Fort Brady complex.

With the end of World War II the military abandoned the Sault area almost as rapidly as it had come. The population suddenly dropped by 10,000. Camp Lucas and Fort Brady were demobilized and closed. The wooden hospital located on the Camp Lucas property was sold to the State of Michigan and became a branch of the Newberry State Hospital. Dr.

Walter T. Thompson, a Methodist, was superintendent and together with Rev. Ratcliffe helped develop a significant ministry at the hospital. This ended with the closing of the hospital in 1954.

Throughout the United States returning veterans, more than 80% of them, took advantage of their veterans' educational benefits and enrolled in all types of schools. The men and women who had survived the Great Depression and World War II saw education and technical training as keys to a better future. Sault Ste. Marie soon felt the impact of this educational revolution. The enrollment demands on Michigan College of Mining and Technology at Houghton exceeded the capacity of that campus. The Fort Brady property was made available to Michigan Tech, through vigorous efforts of local citizens, and the Sault Branch of Michigan Tech was created to handle the overflow in the first two years of the college program. With the conversion of Fort Brady into a college campus this was, as Rev. Ratcliffe so aptly phrased it, "beating our swords into ploughshares."

On April 26, 1946, the parsonage family was enlarged by the birth of Carol Ratcliffe. She is the only baby to be born to a Methodist pastor's family in Sault Ste. Marie during the 20th century.

With the opening of "Sault Tech" in 1946 Central Methodist Church had an influx of families and talent. Mr. and Mrs. Ray Chelberg, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Senter, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Otis, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Youngs, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Heafield, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Crawford, Mr. and Mrs. George Keller, Mr. and Mrs. John Childs, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rice, Mr. and Mrs. James Myers, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Risteen, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Sandstrom, Mr. and Mrs. M.A. Thompson and Mr. and Mrs. T.W. Thompson added significantly to the programs and the talents available in the church outreach. This was also true of the students who were active in the choir and other organizations.

While Central Methodist Church continued its traditional activities with various age groups it



also became involved in new mission areas. Rev. Walter Ratcliffe received a scholarship to attend the 1944 summer session at the Yale School of Alcohol Studies. Rev. Ratcliffe, typical of the Methodist tradition of being both idealistic and realistic, used this special training to strengthen the already established, but struggling, Alcoholics Anonymous program in the Sault area.

Soon after the "Soo Branch" of Michigan Tech was established, a chapter of the Wesley Foundation was organized under the leadership of Rev. Ratcliffe. In 1948 a carload of students, accompanied by the pastor, attended the National Methodist Student Movement (Wesley Foundation) Conference in Champaign, Illinois.

Up to this time Central Methodist Church had never employed a secretary, but with the active ministry of Rev. Ratcliffe and the many programs that were a part of Central's outreach, the need became apparent. Mrs. Mable Leonard was hired on a part-time basis. She worked in the same office as the pastor - a tiny crowded spot on the second floor in the Tower Room which was removed when the Educational Building was constructed. It overlooked the alley in the northwest corner of the church. When a second desk was placed in that office, along with the safe which is still in use, there was little space left in which to move. Mrs. Grace Eagle, who replaced Mrs. Leonard, recalls that when the pastor had a counseling session it was necessary for her to leave the office and wander around the church until the session was over. Finally when the Official Board realized the size of the work-load of the pastor and the part-time secretary, Mrs. Eagle was hired as the first full-time secretary of Central Methodist Church.

As previously stated the north and south walls of the sanctuary were originally of the roll-up type still to be seen in the social room. Usually they were rolled down, but on special occasions, such as Easter and Christmas, they were rolled up to provide additional seating space. Behind those roll-up partitions were stationary seats of the type now

seen in the balcony. The floor was built on a slant as is that in the balcony, giving the appearance of bleachers.

In 1946 the roll-up partitions on the north side were removed and a stationary partition put in its place. The floor was leveled, and in the process charred wood, apparently from the 1904 fire was found under the bleachers. The space became a much-needed classroom.

In 1951, during the pastorate of Rev. Balfour the same process was completed on the south end of the sanctuary to make space for the present office and the pastor's study.

Sunday, June 26, 1949 was "Mary Casler Day" at Central Methodist Church. Mary, daughter of former pastor, Rev. David Casler, was honored for completing 50 years of service as Sunday School teacher, 39 of these in Sault Ste. Marie. Pictures were taken from the time she left her home until she returned there. The entire church service centered around Miss Casler. The sermon by Rev. Walter T. Ratcliffe was "The Meaning of Christian Service." Hymns were her favorites and the solos were sung by two of her former Sunday School pupils, Dr. Donald Finlayson and Margaret Tuxworth. Following the service a reception was held in the social room where friends and relatives, many of whom had come from out of town, greeted her.

The celebration did not indicate retirement, however, for she continued to teach for 5 more years. Following her death in 1966 funds from her estate and memorials were used to furnish classrooms on the second floor of the new Educational Wing of the church. Her piano was also placed in a classroom.

In June 1950 the Official Board established a Memorial Fund.

Rev. Walter C.B. Saxman came to Central in 1950. During his pastorate he asked Miss Mary Casler to

write a history of the church, the first to ever have been written. At that time history was in the minds of many people because the centennial of the construction of the first lock at Sault Ste. Marie, 1853 to 1855, was soon to be celebrated. The Methodist Womens' Society participated in the Locks Centennial by presenting a pageant written by Mrs. Raymond G. Wright. The theme was "An Album of the Decades" featuring a style show narrated by Mrs. Donald D. Finlayson.

Rev. James R. Balfour came in June, 1954. Almost immediately a campaign was launched to cover the cost of extensive repairs to the church and to purchase a new parsonage. Pledges amounting to more than \$50,000 were received. The most extensive repair was that of removing and replacing the joists that supported the floor in the fellowship hall. Dry rot had weakened them and there were real concerns that the floor might give way. Following replacement of the floor the kitchen was moved from its former location in the room outside the nursery (presently used for storage of toys and equipment) to the west wall of the social room. It provided for an outside entrance to the kitchen and the added space made it possible to install a dishwasher and other needed equipment.

The new parsonage at 1004 Parnell was purchased and this provided a much larger accommodation for the pastor and the many groups that gathered at his home. A new divided chancel and new lighting fixtures were ordered, but these were not installed until after Rev. Balfour had been reassigned in 1958.

From the late 1940s through the mid-60s the Methodist Men were very active. Their objective was to provide service and equipment for the church. No job was too big for them. They tackled whatever had to be done, and they did it. When it was discovered that the joists under the first floor needed to be replaced because of dry rot, they didn't call a contractor or hire a work crew. They went after it themselves. They tore off the entire floor, replaced the joists, replaced the floor and covering

without cost to the church. It meant hours and hours of work for many men. They remodeled the nursery, they installed two sound systems and the acoustical ceiling in the social room, wrapped the heating pipes, worked on Anchor House and even went as far as Michigamme to work on the needs there. The card and pencil holders on the backs of the pews were made by them. Two of the men, Donald Holliday and Elwood Eagle, even climbed up to the church steeple and repaired the cross.

Each year they served the Mother-Daughter banquets, and sometimes they prepared the Easter breakfasts. They planned money-making projects, the favorite one being the "Boiled Dinners" which were served for the public. These men had built up a reputation as cooks, and as a result the dinners were well attended.

These men met at the church every other week for dinner at night - usually pot-luck. Sometimes they had as their guests the men from St. Ignace and sometimes the group from a church in the Canadian Soo. They were a well organized group of men who were enthusiastic, and ready to meet any challenge. Even yet, as they talk about those days, their eyes sparkle, they smile, and their whole being lights up.

Wanted. More men of this type.

Christmas Eve services began during the pastorate of Rev. Balfour. At first there were two services, one at 7:30 p.m. and the second at 11:30 p.m. After a few years the later service was discontinued. This is truly an ecumenical service in that people from all churches attend. Even the balconies are filled.

For many years Presbyterian and Methodist congregations combined their services during the months of July and August, meeting one month in the Presbyterian Church and the next in the Methodist Church. In 1958 when the construction and redecorating in the Methodist sanctuary made it impossible to hold services there, the Presbyterians

graciously invited the Methodist congregation to continue to meet in their church for the second month.

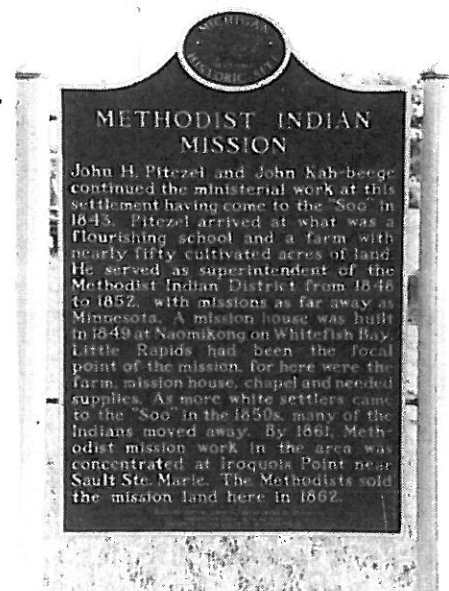
Rev. Verle J. Carson was assigned to the Sault in the summer of 1958. He continued to encourage the congregation to update and repair the church. An Educational Building Fund was started. By the end of his tenure in 1964 more than \$15,000 had been contributed. A new furnace and heating controls were added as well as new lighting fixtures.

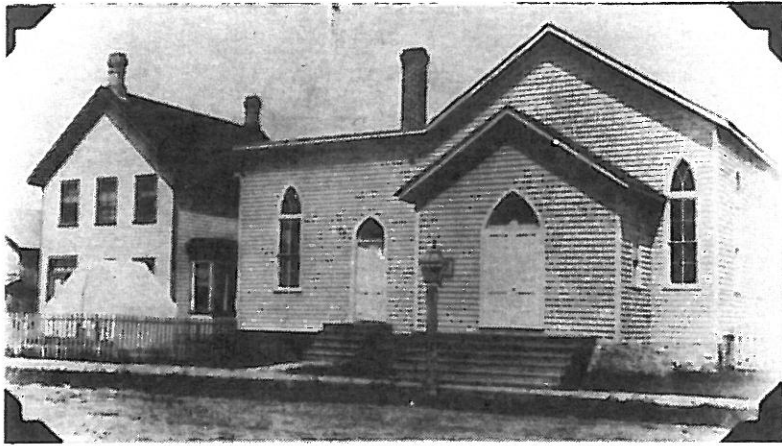
While change and renewal were very much the pattern of Central Church there were those stalwart members that helped maintain a long tradition of family involvement including Gordon Malcolm who served as Superintendent of the Sunday School, as well as teacher of a boys' class, for approximately 25 years. He had continued the tradition set by his father who had likewise been involved with the Sunday School, as superintendent and as a teacher of the Young Mens' class. In addition to Sunday School these men were involved with every other area of church life. Dr. and Mrs. Donald D. Finlayson have followed in the footsteps of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Finlayson, both of whom were extremely active in every phase of church work for nearly fifty years. Then comes Everett Roe. From the time he came to the Soo as a young man in High School, he served his church. He never refused to take on a new responsibility, and was always one of the first to notice some need of his church. For nearly 50 years he was recognized as a leader in everything. There seems to be no end to the pillars who, throughout the years, have supported the church - the Wheatley, the Stonehouse, the Tuxworth families.. These merely touch the surface. It simply isn't possible to mention them all, but there is one who must not be omitted. For more than 40 years she acted as secretary to the Primary Department of the Sunday School. She was always there every Sunday, regardless of the weather or the temperature. She had no car. She walked! What dedication to her church! That person is Miss Ann Raeburn who now resides at Provincial House.



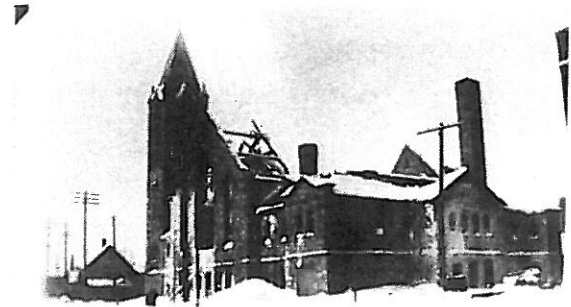
These elm trees marked the site of the first Methodist Mission built in 1833. Located on the grounds of the Country Club.

1980 - This marker replaced the elm trees which died from Dutch elm disease. Located on the left side of Riverside Drive past the curve at the Country Club.

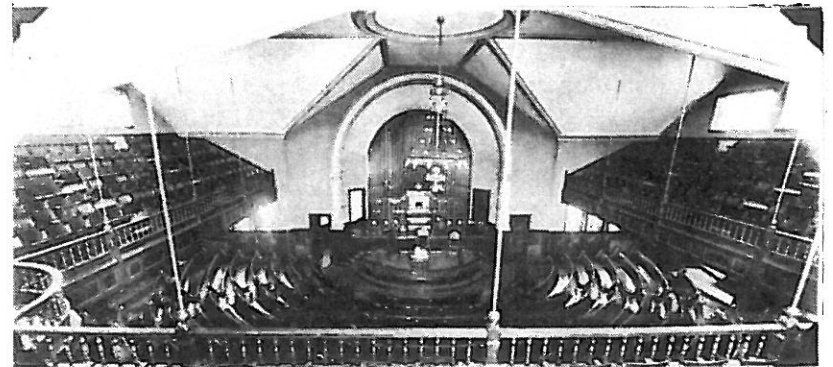




The first Methodist Episcopal Church in Sault Ste. Marie. Built in 1888, it stood on the north side of Portage Avenue on ground now used for Ashmun Street.



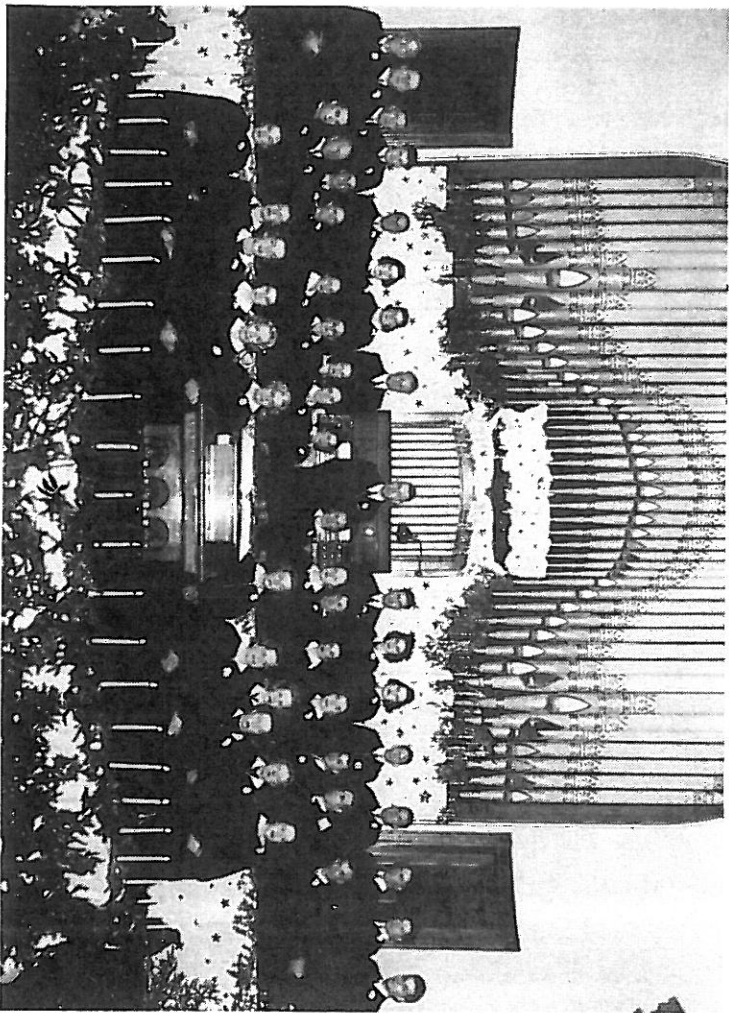
After the fire on January 28, 1904.



The interior of the Methodist Episcopal Church about 1906.



Christmas 1941. Note the organ pipes, the position of the organ console, the position of the pulpit and the closed railing. Two hours before the choir concert, a lighted candle tipped over, starting a fire that destroyed the entire front of the church.



Interior of Central Methodist Church after the fire of 1941.



Interior of Central United Methodist Church after 1958 when chancel was divided.



The 15 foot lighted, rotating cross was given to the church in 1924 by former Governor of Michigan, Chase S. Osborne.



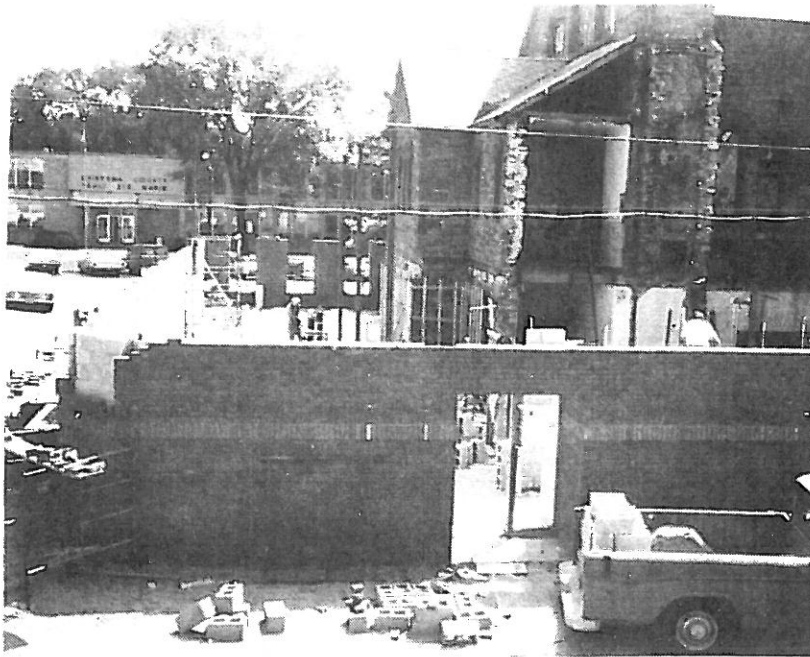
The parsonage at 1004 Parnell, purchased in 1956.



Ground-breaking ceremony for the new Educational Building - Spring 1970.



Choir of 1892.



Building in progress, showing both west and north sections. City County building in distance.

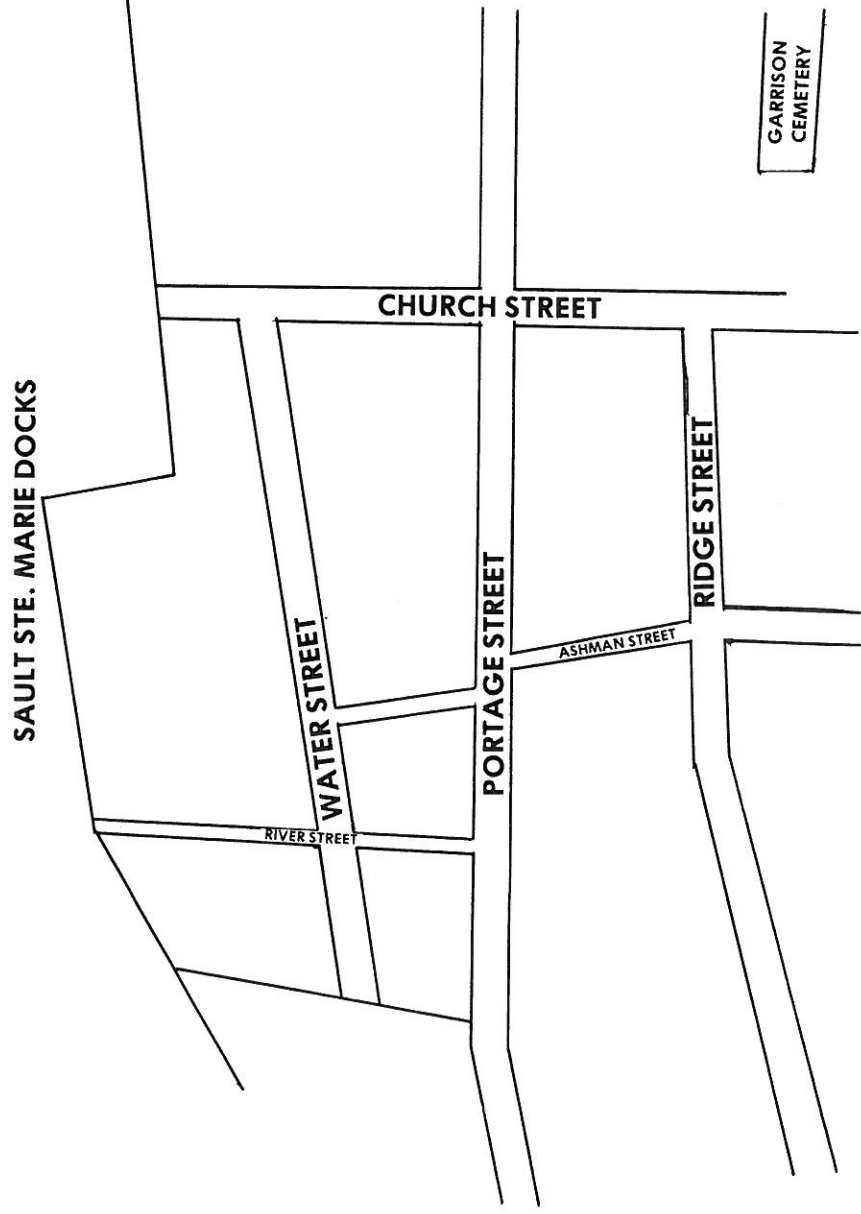


Junior Choir and Chancel choir in recent years.

# Map of the Village of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

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Surveyed in 1854 & 1855



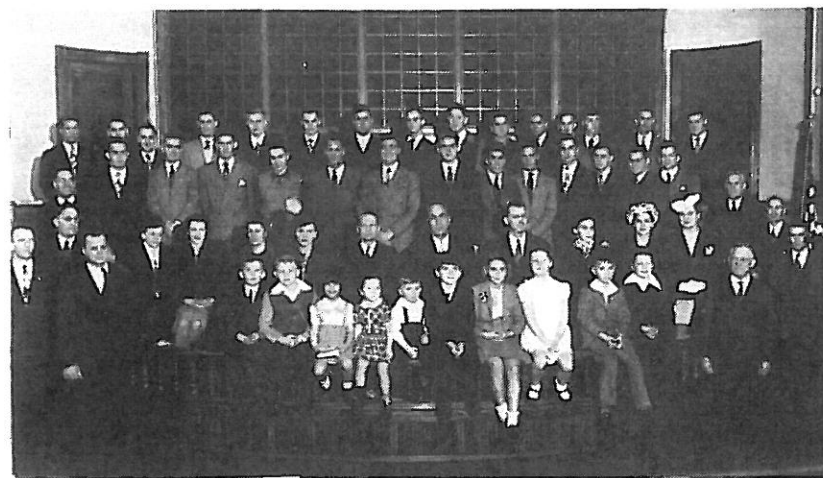




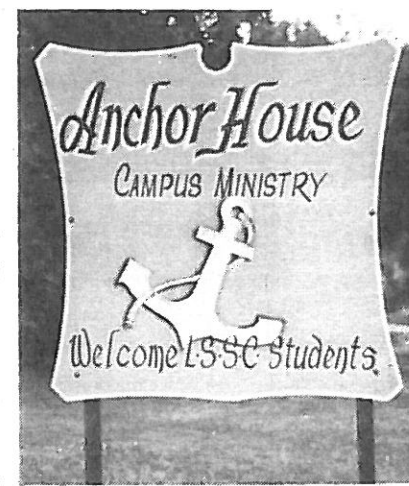
A Sunday School class.



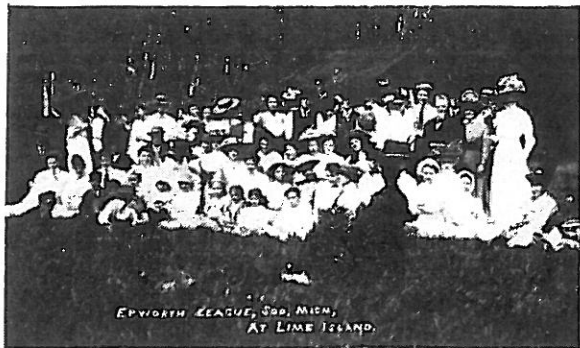
Christmas Pageant by Sunday School.



Methodist students and faculty of Sault Branch, Michigan Technological University, in attendance at church on Palm Sunday, 1947.



Anchor House, 812 Summit Street, purchased in 1968. Rev. Robert L.S. Brown presents the deed to Albert Senter, Chairman of the Wesley Foundation Board.



Epworth League outing at Lime Island. Date unknown.



Methodist Youth Fellowship Retreat  
Camp Connelly - 1981



Boy Scout Troop 103 - organized in 1920.



PAST PRESIDENTS  
25th Anniversary of Womans' Society of Christian Service  
Central Methodist Church  
1965



Burning of the mortgage on the Educational Building, January 9, 1977.



Child Care Center

Central United Methodist Church salutes all of its dedicated pillars of the past and present.

In 1964 Algonquin Methodist Church became a part of the responsibility of the minister at Central. Also in 1964 there was a restructuring of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, in which the Woman's Society of Christian Service became part of the newly created World and National Divisions.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Senter accepted the responsibility of revitalizing the Wesley Foundation on college campus in 1961. Their campus home became the meeting place for faculty and students involved in the Wesley program. The vigorous and lively discussions on religious and social issues, and the warm hospitality of the Senter home, provided the foundations for this mission of the church. The students met every Sunday, and then every other Sunday, till "Wesley House", a home located at 812 Summit Street, was purchased in 1968. Since the purpose of Wesley Foundation centers is to provide "a home away from home" for Methodist college students this new home appeared to be ideal for the purpose. A Board of Directors of the Wesley Foundation was established, with Albert Senter as chairman. At that time financial support came directly from the Methodist Church, but in 1971 the ministry became ecumenical and the name was changed to "Anchor House." Financial support then came from the United Ministries in High Education as well as from Central United Methodist Church, First United Presbyterian Church, Faith Lutheran Church, Rudyard Presbyterian Church, and the Presbyterian Synod of the Covenant and Mackinac Presbytery. Mrs. and Mrs. Charles Nairn became the first resident advisors at Anchor House.

Rev. Carson left Sault Ste. Marie in 1965 and was replaced by Rev. Byron Hatch. In 1967 he was transferred to a conference office position in Detroit.

At Central United Methodist Church the Sunday School program had always involved the largest



number of adults and children of any church program. In the 1960s the average attendance was 200 or above. To understand the difficulties under which teachers worked the reader must imagine the north wall of the church as that by the stairway leading to second floor. At the west the wall ended at the foot of the red-carpeted stairway. How could 200 people have Sunday School classes in such limited space? There was only one way and that was to use every nook and cranny for a classroom. But in spite of the overcrowding there was a warm feeling of belonging to something important. Teachers were challenged to the utmost to present a good teaching atmosphere, and they met the challenge. So eager were the children that when Christmas fell on Sunday one year, the attendance remained up to average.

Previous to 1962 classes had been separated into boys' and girls' classes, but in that year segregation ended. Emphasis was placed on the spiritual side of teaching, and teacher training sessions were started. Sufficient space was the most pressing need.

Back in the years when Miss Mary Casler was in charge of the Primary Department, which was from 1910 to 1954, she advocated expansion of existing facilities. After World War II she suggested the purchase of the building next to the church on Court Street to be remodeled for educational rooms. This suggestion did not draw much support from the Official Board.

Miss Letha Stevens, Chairman of the Commission of Education from 1956 to 1971, took up the cause for building expansion. During the next 12 years she and many others continued to work toward this goal. For the year 1968-69 a decision was made to seek space outside the church building for grades 7 through 12. Rooms on the third floor of the Masonic Temple Building were used that year.

When Rev. Robert S. Brown came to Central in 1967 he encouraged the Administrative Board to appoint a Building Committee which could study the needs of the church and community and make

recommendations as to the type of expansion which was most appropriate.

Members of the committee were: Eric Nyman, chairman, Mrs. Donald Finlayson, Miss Letha Stevens, Mrs. Howard Mitchell, Mrs. Sam Dubow, Mrs. Harold Bruce, Mrs. Donald Dalglish, Jesse Gillett, Everett Roe, Langsford Collins, Robert Noble, Lewis Walter and William Lewis. When Eric Nyman moved out of town, William Lewis assumed the chairmanship.

The leadership of Central Methodist Church seemed about to make a bold commitment to expand the outreach and mission of the church in spite of the drastic social changes that were affecting the Sault area. Since 1955 all of the major industries had closed. The population of the city had begun to decline, and by 1970 it would be 15,000 and by 1980 it would be 13,400.

In planning for full use of the new building, during the week as well as on Sunday, the various ministries and missions of the church were considered. A study of total community needs was made. Boy Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-non, Day Nursery, Christian Youth Center, and Senior Citizen needs were discussed to find Central Methodist's role in them. Each of these areas reflected a realistic appreciation for the social changes of the post-war period. With more working mothers, single parent families, and other problems related to changing social values the church was being called upon to adapt and serve in new ways.

Late in the summer of 1969 plans were completed and the membership, meeting in general session, voted almost unanimously to proceed with the building of a new addition on the 18 feet of land bordering on the alley on the north and west sides of the church. It was to be two stories high without an elevator, doors to be cut through the stone wall for entry from the church into the Teen Center and second floor corridor. Funds were to be provided by three 3-year campaigns amounting to \$70,000 per campaign. Memorial funds were to be used for furnishings.



Bids were opened in April, 1970. To the joyous surprise of everyone the lowest bid was much lower than anticipated, just \$132,000. Work was begun at once. It proceeded on schedule and on Easter Sunday, 1971, the new Educational Building was opened for use.

Provision had been made to preserve the stained glass windows wherever possible. These windows had been installed when the church was rebuilt in 1905. Most of them had been given as memorials. The type of glass from which they are made can no longer be duplicated. There was discussion in regard to the three windows on the north west front of the sanctuary because they would be covered by the wall of the new building. Finally a decision was made to place fluorescent lighting behind those windows so that when lighted the appearance is that of outside light shining through.

About in the mid 70s discovery was made that the casings and sills in which the stained glass windows were held were deteriorating to the point where the windows might fall out at any time. This was an emergency and a costly one, but members of one of the dedicated families of the church offered to pay for the expense from funds from the estate of their parents who had been life-long members of the church.

In the fall of 1975 a chair-lift, purchased from Memorial Funds, was installed in the stairway at the northwest corner of the Educational Building.

The wisdom and expectations of the building committee continue to be verified weekly. The Child Care Center has become an important community resource and is rated by professionals in the field as one of the best in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan. The Bazaar workshop provides creative and social contacts for young mothers and other interested ladies. The Quilting Group serves a large number of women and provides fellowship for many whose families have moved away. The numerous boards of the church and boards of many community organizations also use the facilities.

Other organizational changes were affecting the Methodist Church a large. In 1968 the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethern Church were united to form the United Methodist Church. The name of the womans' organization was changed from Womans' Society of Christian Service to the Womens' Society of Christian Service because the Evangelical United Bretheran organization had been called Womens' Society of World Service.

A more radical change came in 1973, when a new name, United Methodist Women, was adopted. The revised organization provided for more flexibility, including small groups in addition to circles. As a result of changing life styles the importance of general meetings declined. Instead of the original nine or ten meetings each year, there are now only four. The most popular for many years has been the May luncheon.

Throughout all the changes the women of Central United Methodist Church have remained interested in the missionary outreach of the general church, and in serving the local church.

In the early part of the century money was raised largely through public dinners. With the change in life style, and pressure from the health authorities, public dinners were discontinued. Gradually the annual tea and gift sale in December assumed greater importance as a money-maker. In addition to their work through United Methodist Women and its predecessors, women have taken part directly in the work of the church, serving as Sunday School teachers, leaders of youth groups and work areas and many other similar types of work.

Rev. Theodore Doane came to the Sault in 1972. During the eight years of his ministry he added emphasis to the need for new missions of service. He became involved in establishing the Halfway House, now known as New Hope. This is a home to provide support to those who are making an attempt to recover from alcoholism. It is presently located at 1139 East Portage. Women of the churches in Sault Ste. Marie contribute cookies, breads, etc. to

this mission regularly. He was instrumental in obtaining funds to provide an Indian Developer for the local Native American community. The Child Care Center was expanded. Dr. Stephen Keeling volunteered to work in Haiti for a period of two weeks as part of a missionary project aimed at improving the dental program in that country. Later both he and his wife repeated the trip for an equal length of time. Part of his expenses were paid by Central United Methodist Church members who donated generously.

Children's sermons were reinstated as was the Vacation Bible School. An annual invitation was extended to Rev. Doane to speak to the Home and Family Living Classes at the high school and to the Sociology classes at the college. He laughingly tells about the time he and the custodian went up on the roof of the Educational Building and applied a coat of tar. For two years there were no leaks.

In 1975 came the announcement that Eric Norlin had been ordained as an elder. This was the third young man who had gone out into the ministry from Central Church. The first was Ivan Gonser who was ordained in 1935 and the next was David Bort who was ordained in 1957.

While in Sault Ste. Marie Rev. Doane celebrated the 25th anniversary of his admission into the ministry. In January 1979 the United Methodist Women presented him with a certificate announcing that a gift had been made to missions in his honor.

One of the highlights during these years was celebrated on January 9, 1977 with the burning of the mortgage on the Educational Building. Rev. Grenfell, district superintendent, was presented with a large golden key - made of wood - the key to the Educational Building. Originally it had been expected that the mortgage would be paid off in 1979, but members of Central United Methodist Church had come through as usual, and payment had been completed two years sooner than anticipated.

Rev. Doane's training in premarital and marital

counseling became an important contribution to church families and many others in the community. He became an acknowledged leader among the clergy of the Sault area as they grappled with the changes in their congregations.

Rev. John C. Huhtala was appointed to Sault Ste. Marie in June 1980. One of his aims is to build a strong congregation by developing programs in education, missions, worship, etc. so that members may feel capable of taking on responsibilities within the church.

The congregation has taken on the project of partial support of Dr. and Mrs. Theodore Townsend, missionaries, who are teaching at Leonard Theological College in Jabalpur, India.

In a period of many doubts about the future, Rev. Huhtala has brought a ministry of spiritual renewal, hope and social outreach.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 150th Anniversary Celebration History Committee wishes to acknowledge the contributions made to the task of compiling this brief history.

The major source was the historical work of Miss Mary Casler. Miss Casler was a Sunday School teacher from 1899 to 1955 and well acquainted with the history makers of the church. In 1953 Rev. Walter C.B. Saxman asked Miss Casler to prepare a history of Central Methodist Church. The result was the most detailed and complete account written before 1983.

Another source was Miss Casler's history as revised, updated, and published in 1968 for the 135th anniversary of Methodism in the Sault Ste. Marie area.

Special appreciation is extended to Mrs. Raymond G. Wright, current church historian, for Central Methodist church. Mrs. Wright's brief histories of the church, women's organizations, musical traditions and groups, and her reminiscences and lifelong acquaintance with local Methodism have been important contributions.

Two additional histories have provided valuable background for this present study. A brief history of Central Methodist church, by Mr. John Kenn, was prepared for the 1968 celebration. The other is a 1955 publication of the Historical Society of The Detroit Annual Conference entitled "History of Methodism in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan."

The history of the post-World War II period relied heavily upon the information supplied by Rev. Walter Ratcliffe, Rev. James R. Balfour, Rev. Verle J. Carson, Rev. Robert L.S. Brown, Mrs. Mary Senter and Mrs. Ray Chelberg.

Our special appreciation to Miss Letha Stevens for sharing her extensive files on the Sunday School, the Rev. David Casler Diary and Autobiography, Rev. David Casler's copy of Rev. James F.

Davidson's Semi-Centennial Discourse published by the Detroit Conference in 1882, her own history of repairs, renovations and remodelings of Central Church, and her very detailed history of the construction of the educational addition to the church. Also our warmest thanks for her persistence in searching and finding the "lost box of historical photographs" and the "lost scrapbook of Russell Stonehouse" which contained a photographic history of the construction of the educational addition, programs from various church events going back to 1912, photographs of various church groups and activities since 1928, and extensive newspaper clippings covering the period from 1940 to the present.

Miss Lurene Burgan shared her history of Women of Central United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Dorothy VanDyke, longtime church secretary, was of special importance in assisting with research in the Chippewa County Recorder's office and records.

Walter Materna and Dr. Tom G. Robinson assisted with photography.

Newspaper clippings, programmes from church celebrations, and other items related to Central Methodist were collected in large scrapbooks by Mr. Russell Stonehouse. One of these has been continued by Mrs. Raymond G. Wright and will be completed for the 150th celebration.

Also of special historical interest was Abel Stevens' history of Methodism entitle "The Centenary of American Methodism" published in 1866.

# METHODISM IN SAULT STE. MARIE

## Missionaries (Appointed by the New York Conference)

Rev. John Clarke	1833
Rev. W.H. Brockway	1838
Rev. John H. Pitezell	1843
Mission terminated in 1964	

## Ministers of Central Methodist Church

Rev. Issac Johnston	1873
Rev. C.L. Church	1876
Rev. S.J. Brown	1877
Rev. J. Donelson (supply)	1878
Rev. D.B. Millar	1879
Rev. Wm. E. Bigelow	1882
Rev. G.H. Whitney	1885
Rev. David Casler	1887
Rev. James E. Whalen	1890
Rev. W.C. Hicks (Asst.)	1890
Rev. Calvin M. Thompson	1893
Rev. A.W. Stalker	1897
Rev. C.B. Steele	1900
Rev. M.S. Hawks	1903
Rev. Horace Westwood	1907
Rev. S.W. Horner	1908
Rev. D.S. Shaw	1912
Rev. G. Arthur Cook	1915
Rev. E.P. Bennett	1918
Rev. Jos. Dutton D.D.	1922
Rev. Geo. B. Marsh	1926
Rev. Marshall W. Hoyt	1929
Rev. Clyde Gearhart	1934
Rev. R.W. Stoakes	1937
Rev. Walter Ratcliffe	1943
Rev. Walter B. Saxman	1950
Rev. James R. Balfour	1954
Rev. Verle Carson	1958
Rev. Byron Hatch	1965
Rev. Robert L.S. Brown	1967
Rev. Theodore Doane	1972
Rev. John Huhtala, Jr.	1980

## PRESIDENTS OF WOMAN'S SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE WOMEN'S SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND UNTIED METHODIST WOMEN

1940-1942	Mrs. Clyde Hunsberger
1942-1944	Mrs. Harvey Kappahn
1944-1945	Mrs. Earl Thomas
1945-1946	Mrs. Russell Stonehouse
1946-1948	Mrs. Ronald Tuxworth
1948-1950	Mrs. Harold Eastburn
1950-1952	Mrs. Harold Bruce
1952-1954	Mrs. Frank Hillock
1954-1955	Mrs. Donald D. Finlayson
1955-1957	Mrs. Everett Roe
1957-1958	Mrs. Carter McGregor
1958-1960	Mrs. Stanley Lyons
1960-1961	Mrs. Edwin Bye
1961-1964	Mrs. Donald Holliday
1964-1966	Mrs. Richard Speicher
1966-1968	Miss Lurene Burgan
1968-1969	Mrs. James McMillan
1969-1970	Miss Lurene Burgan
1970-1971	Mrs. Robert Curtis
1971-1972	Mrs. Donald D. Finlayson
1972-1973	Mrs. Dale Horrom
1973-1974	Mrs. Grant Washburn
1974-1975	Mrs. Arthur Hillman
1975-1976	Mrs. William Poppink
1976-1978	Mrs. Gerald Bell
1978-1979	Mrs. Arthur Hillman
1979-1982	Mrs. Kevin Hughes
1982-1983	Mrs. Robert Larson